

The Women in the Garden
Opera in one act by Vivian Fine

Note: Scene divisions are not marked in the score, but have been added as guidelines. Texts printed in adjacent columns are sung simultaneously. In Scene 8, "ALL" refers only to the four women.

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Scene 1

GERTRUDE STEIN: Man is man was man will be gregarious and solitary, he will be because it is his nature to be he will be because he has a mind to and even once more it is more and more and more as if he wants to. What has the human mind got to do with talking. Just that what you say makes you want to say it again and what you say wants to make you say it another way say the same thing another or the other thing in some way. In the month of February were born Washington Lincoln and I.

EMILY DICKINSON: We must be careful what we say. No bird resumes its nest. That sacred closet when you sweep Entitled memory, select a reverential broom and do it silently.

[simultaneously]

G.STEIN: Anyway is another way if you say it the same way. There is no reality to a really imagined life any more.

E.DICKINSON: Select a reverential broom and do it silently.

G.STEIN: What is the difference between rememb'ring what has been happening and rememb'ring what has been as dreaming. None. Therefore there is no relation between human nature and the human mind. One and one makes two but not in minutes.

E.DICKINSON: To flee from memory Had we the wings

G.STEIN: No never again in minutes.

E.DICKINSON: Many would fly inured to slower things

[simultaneously]

E.DICKINSON: Birds with dismay would scan the mighty van Of men escaping from the mind of man.

G.STEIN: One and one makes two but not in minutes. No never again in minutes.

ISADORA DUNCAN: I was born by the sea, and I have noticed that all the great events of my life have taken place by the sea. I was born under the star of Aphrodite. Aphrodite also born of the sea, and when her star is in the ascendant events are always propitious to me, but when this star disappears there is disaster for me. My first idea of movement of the dance came from the rhythm of the sea. My life and art were born of the sea.

G.STEIN: Tears do not bring pleasure to the home. They give pleasure in reading.

VIRGINIA WOOLF: But one could perhaps go a little deeper into the questions of novel writing and the effect of sex upon the novelist.

G.STEIN: Tears do not bring pleasure to the home. They give pleasure in reading.

V.WOOLF: First there are nine months before the baby is born. Then the baby is born. Then there are three or four months spent in feeding the baby. After baby is fed there are certainly five years spent playing with baby. You cannot it seems let children run about the streets.

G.STEIN: Yes there I told you human nature is not at all int'resting.

V.WOOLF: It is only for the last forty-eight years that Mrs. Seton has had a penny of her own. For all the centuries before it would have been her husband's property—a thought which perhaps may have had its share in keeping Mrs. Seton and her mothers off the Stock Exchange.

G.STEIN: Yes money. Money has something to do with the human mind.

V.WOOLF: For all the centuries before it would have been her husband's property.

G.STEIN: Yes money money has something to do with the human mind.

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Scene 2

Page 23 (m. 216)

E. DICKINSON: The way I read a letter's this:

'Tis first I lock the door,
and push it with my fingers next,
for transport it be sure.
And then I go the furthest off
To counteract a knock;
Then draw my little letter forth
And slowly pick the lock.
Then glancing narrow at the wall,
and narrow at the floor,
for firm conviction of a mouse
Not exorcised before.
Peruse how infinite I am, how infinite I am
to no one that you know,
and sigh and sigh for lack of heav'n,
but not the heav'n God bestow,

TENOR: Going to her Happy letter tell her,
tell her the page I never wrote.
Tell her! I only said the syntax
and left the verb and pronoun out.

Tell her just how the fingers hurried,
 then how they stammered slow slow
 and then you wished you had eyes in your pages
 so you could see what moved them so.
 Tell her it wasn't a practiced writer –
 you guessed from the way the sentence toiled,
 you could hear the bodice tug behind you
 as if it held but the might of a child!

E. DICKINSON: Tell him! I only said the
 syntax and left the verb and pronoun out. Tell him
 just how the fingers hurried then how they waded
 slow slow and then you wished you had eyes in
 your pages so you could see what moved them so.
 Tell him it wasn't a practiced writer, you guessed
 from the way the sentence toiled, you could hear
 the bodice tug behind you as if it held but the
 might of a child! You almost pitied it it worked so.
 Tell him – No – you may quibble there, For it
 would split his heart to know it, And then you and
 I were silenter.

TENOR: Tell her! I only said the
 syntax and left the verb and pronoun out,
 Tell her just how the fingers hurried then
 how they stammered slow slow slow
 slow slow slow slow slow slow slow
 slow slow slow slow slow slow. Tell her
 it wasn't a practiced writer, you guessed
 from the way the sentence toiled. You
 could hear the bodice tug behind you as if
 it held but the might of a child! You
 almost pitied it it worked so. Tell her –
 No – you may quibble there.

E.DICKINSON + TENOR: For it would split his/her heart to know it. And then you and I
 were silenter.

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Scene 3
 Page 34 (m. 309)

G. STEIN (*to audience*): One and one makes two but not in minutes. No never again in
 minutes.

V. WOOLF (*to G.S. and E.D.*): Now let me try, before we go to tea, to fix the moment in one effort
 of supreme endeavor. This shall endure. We are parting; some to tea, some to the nets; I shall show
 my essay to Mister Barker. This will endure. From discord, from hatred my shattered mind is pieced
 together by some sudden perception. I take the trees, the clouds to be witnesses of my complete
 integration. I, Virginia, who shall walk the earth these sixty years, am born entire, out of hatred, out
 of discord.

G. STEIN: One and one makes two but not in minutes. No never again in minutes.

E. DICKINSON: When a little girl I had a friend who taught me Immortality, but venturing too
 near, himself, he never returned.

V.WOOLF: My shattered mind is pieced together by some sudden perception. The trees wave, the clouds pass. The time approaches when these soliloquies shall be shared. We shall not always give out a sound like a beaten gong as one sensation strikes and then another.

G.STEIN: Yes money. Money has something to do with the human mind.

E.DICKINSON: When I died my death was recorded by the Amherst town clerk. Occupation;
At home. When I died

[simultaneously]

E.DICKINSON: occupation: At home. When I died occupation: At home.

G.STEIN: Man is man was man will be gregarious and solitary.

V.WOOLF: Now grass and trees, the travelling air blowing empty spaces in the blue which they then recover, shaking the leaves which then replace themselves, and our ring here hints at some other order, some other order, and better, which makes a reason everlastingly, which makes a reason everlastingly.

V.WOOLF: The trees wave, the clouds pass. The time approaches when these soliloquies shall be shared. We shall not always give out a sound like a beaten gong as one sensation strikes and then another

And our ring here hints at some other order, some other order and better which makes a reason everlastingly, everlastingly.

E.DICKINSON: When
I died my death was
recorded by the
Amherst town clerk.
Occupation: At home
When I died
Occupation
At home.
When I died,
occupation
At home..
At home.

G.STEIN: He will be because it is his nature to, he will be because he has a mind to and even once more it is more and more and more as if he wants to.

as if he wants to,
wants to.

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Scene 4

Page 48 (m.424)

I.DUNCAN: Oh why oh why should my Mama be so sad and so sorry? Oh why oh why should my Mama be so sad and so sorry? There are some sorrows that kill, I may seem to go on living, my body drags its weary way on earth, my spirit is crushed, forever crushed. I have heard people speak of the ennobling influence of sorrow, of sorrow. I can only say that those last days of my life, before the blow fell, before the blow fell were the last days of my spiritual life, were the last days of my spiritual life. Ever since then I have had one desire, to fly, to fly, to fly from the horror of it, from the horror of it. My life has been a weird flight from it all, I am the sad Wandering Jew, the Flying Dutchman, and my life has been to me but as a phantom ship upon a phantom ocean.

E.DICKINSON: Pain has an element of blank, it cannot recollect when it began or a day when it was not. It has no future but itself, its infinite realms contain its past enlightened to perceive New periods of pain, of pain.

I.DUNCAN: I am the sad Wandering Jew,

[simultaneously]

I.DUNCAN: the Flying Dutchman, and my life has been to me but as a phantom ship upon a phantom ocean.

E.DICKINSON: Pain has an element of blank it cannot recollect when it began or a day when it was not. It has no future but itself, its infinite realms contain

[simultaneously]

E.DICKINSON: its past enlightened to perceive new periods of pain, of pain.

V.WOOLF: Summer comes and winter, the seasons pass, the pear fills itself and drops from the tree. The dead leaf rests on its edge.

V.WOOLF: Sleep sleep I croon, whether it is summer or winter, May or November. Sleep I sing, sleep, sleep I croon, sleep I croon. Whether it is summer or winter, May or November, sleep I sing, sleep, sleep I croon I am all spun to a fine thread round the cradle, wrapping in a cocoon made of my own blood the delicate limbs of my baby.

I. DUNCAN: Oh why oh why should my Mama be so sad and so sorry?

[simultaneously]

I.DUNCAN: Oh why,
oh why
should my Mama be so sad and o sorry?

Ever since then I have had one
desire, to fly
to fly, to fly from the horror of it,
from the horror of it.

V.WOOLF: Summer comes and winter,
the seasons pass
the pear fills itself and drops from the tree.
The dead leaf rests on its edge.
Sleep, sleep I croon,
whether it is summer or winter,
May or November, sleep I sing
sleep sleep I croon.

G.STEIN: The human mind has nothing to do with sorrow and with disappointment and with tears. The human mind knows neither memory nor tears, it can forget, but what can it forget, it can forget nothing but not be remembering indeed not by remembering and so he and she and she and he do know what the human mind is.

I.DUNCAN: I may seem to go on living, my body drags its weary way on earth, my spirit is crushed, forever crushed.

E.DICKINSON: Pain has an element of blank, it cannot recollect when it began, or if there was a day when it was not.

V.WOLF:

Summer comes
and winter, the
seasons pass, the
pear fills itself
and drops from
the trees. The
dead leaf rests on
its edge.

G.STEIN The human mind has nothing to do with sorrow and with disappointment and with tears. The human mind knows neither memory nor tears, it can forget, but what can it forget it can forget nothing but not by remembering indeed not by remembering and so he and she and she and he do know what the human mind is, min is he and she and she and he do know what the human mind is, mind is.

E.D: Pain
has an
element of
blank. It
cannot
recollect
recollect
when it
began

or a day
when it,
when it was
not. It has no
future but
itself.

I.DUNCAN: Oh why,
oh why

I am the sad Wandering
Jew, the Flying
Dutchman, and my life
has been to me but as a
phantom ship upon a
phantom ocean.

I am the sad Wandering Jew.

Sleep I croon-
Sleep I sing,
sleep sleep I
croon

I am all spun to a
fine thread round
the cradle,
wrapping in a
cocoon made of
my own blood
the delicate limbs
of my baby, of
my baby.

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Scene 5

Page 62 (m. 625)

G.STEIN: Does he or she does she or he know what the human mind is. Does he or she does she or he know what the human mind is. And so all the old chapters end tears end tears end. But all this has nothing to do with the human mind, the use of the human mind and tears. It has been said by very many, said by Jules Verne, he weeps he weeps, that shows he is a man, he weeps he weeps, that shows he is a man. But a dog but a dog can have tears in his eyes yes he can have tears in his eyes he can have tears he can have tears when he has been disillusioned.

TENOR: A dog when he begged always got what he asked for.

G.STEIN: One day he begged a little dog to give him what he wanted.

TENOR: One day he begged a little dog to give him what he wanted

G.STEIN: to give him what he wanted.

TENOR: The little dog did not give him what he wanted.
G.STEIN: The dog the dog had tears in his eyes
TENOR: and so to cry does not make the human mind
G.STEIN: oh no to cry does not make the human mind
G.STEIN + TENOR: it makes a piece of nature, it makes a piece of nature but it does not make
the human mind the human mind. Oh dear does she does he does he does she know what the human
mind is
G.STEIN: and if he does
TENOR: and if she does she does and if she does

[simultaneously]

G.STEIN: and if he does if he does what is the human mind the human mind
TENOR: she does she does the human mind

G.STEIN + TENOR: the human mind the human mind.

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Scene 6

Page 77 (m. 736)

V. WOOLF My aunt, Mary Beton, I must tell you, died by a fall from her horse when she was riding out to take the air in Bombay, died by a fall from her horse which she was riding out to take tha air in Bombay. A solicitor's letter fell into the postbox; I found she had left me five hundred pounds a year forever. Before that I had made my living by cadging odd jobs from newspapers, by reporting a donkey show here or a wedding there; I had earned a few pounds addressing envelopes, reading to old ladies, making artificial flowers, teaching the alphabet to small children in a kindergarten. I had made my living by cadging odd jobs from newspapers, by reporting a donkey show here or a wedding there; I had earned a few pounds addressing envelopes, reading to old ladies, making artificial flowers, teaching the alphabet to small children in a kindergarten.

G.STEIN Yes money money has something to do with the human mind.

V.WOOLF Such were the chief occupations open to women before nineteen eighteen

G.STEIN: I cannot begin too often begin to wonder what money is.

V.WOOLF: The woman composer stands where the actress stood in the time of Shakespeare.

G.STEIN: Has it to do with human nature or the human mind.

V. WOOLF: And here we have the very words used again in this year of grace nineteen-twenty-eight.

G.STEIN: Human nature can use it but cannot refuse it. cannot refuse it.

V.WOOLF: And here we have the very words used again in this year of grace nineteen-twenty-eight.

Scene 8
Page 107 (m. 10-A)

E.DICKINSON: How still the bells in steeples stand till swollen with the sky
 They leap upon their silver feet in frantic melody!

VIRGINIA WOOLF: Bells began ringing, the harsh cries of the prophets were heard.

ISADORA DUNCAN: Far away a bell tolls, but not for death, there are bells that ring for life, Oh, I
am in love with life!

G. STEIN/ALL: The sailor cannot see the North, but knows the needle can.

ALL: At this moment a church clock chimed in the valley.

V. WOOLF: How still the bells in steeples stand

[simultaneously]

I.D. + E.D. + G.S: At this moment a church clock chimed in the valley
V.WOOLF: till swollen with the sky they leap upon their silver feet

ALL: in frantic melody, in frantic melody.

[simultaneously]

I.DUNCAN: Far away a bell tolls but not for death.

V.WOOLF: Bells began ringing, the harsh cries of the prophets were heard.

E.DUNCAN. + G.STEIN / ALL: Cymbals, drums, bones, beaten perpetually. There are bells
that ring for life, Oh, I am in love with life!

I.DUNCAN /ALL: We knew for the first time the joy of sleeping all night in each other's arms,
and I had the unsurpassed joy of waking at dawn to find my hair tangled in his black scented curls,
and to feel his arms around me.

E.DICKINSON / ALL: I did not know how to tell time by the clock till I was fifteen. My father
thought he had taught me but I did not understand, and afraid to say I did not, and afraid to ask
anyone else lest he should know, and sigh and sigh.

G.STEIN: How ardently hurry comes too late

V.WOOLF: It is very painful, if it is true, that not ev'ry nightingale can sing.

E.D: I liked the difference between being alone and not alone

ALL: Man is man was Man will be gregarious and solitary. He will be because it is his nature to, he will be because he has a mind to and even once more it is more and more and more as if he wants to...as if he wants to.

The ceremony is over and the good-byes. Now there is this handshaking ceremony, now I must go on waving, now I must go on waving, I must go on waving, I must go on waving till we turn the corner.

I.DUNCAN: My longings go out to you in waves always flowing from me always flowing from me. I receive something in return which flows to me in waves.

V.WOOLF: The trees wave, the clouds pass, and where are we going

ALL: where are we going.

G.STEIN: one and one makes two but not in minutes. No never again in minutes.

ALL: forget, forget.

V.WOOLF: And the twelfth stroke of midnight sounded; the twelfth stroke of midnight, Thursday, the eleventh of October, Nineteen Hundred and Twenty-eight.

TENOR + G STEIN: Man is, Man was, man will be gregarious and solitary.

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